



LISTED WEST TO EAST

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL BYERS

Everybody Happy?

OUR TOP-10 DESTINATIONS FOR FAMILY GOLF TRIPS

They say you can't please all the people all the time. Yet somehow, a family vacation is supposed to do just that. Husbands, wives, toddlers, teens—everybody all together now—“That was an awesome trip!”

An impossible dream? No. But you must pick your spot carefully. Informed by a survey of roughly 1,200 Golf Digest readers, we identified 10 golf resorts that provide the greatest experience for the nongolfers in your family. Five really impressed us, and the other five are certainly worth it if you can drive there (flying with dependents can be as grueling as it is costly, we know).

These destinations actively encourage novice golfers to play the game and improve. So maybe you'll come home with some new members for your regular foursome—or, at a minimum, people who'll support you next time you suggest a family trip featuring golf. —PETER FINCH

1

La Costa CALIFORNIA

PLAY La Costa's Champions course hosted a PGA Tour event for decades, and later the Accenture Match Play. The Legends course is more forgiving. Both recently had thorough makeovers, including rebuilt greens and new bunkers. “Express” tees of about 4,500 yards are meant for children and novices. The fleet of four-passenger golf carts has families in mind.

- **STAY** All the rooms are luxurious. The question is, do you want a traditional hotel experience (guest rooms and suites) or a home-away-from-home feel (the villas)? All are centrally located, with pools. Consider asking to be near the Splash Landing pool, with its two 100-foot water slides.

- **THE DEAL** Children under 18 pay half the green fee when playing with a parent. The parent fee of \$210 to \$230 drops by half at 2 p.m.

- **NOT GOLF** The surrounding area is famous for SeaWorld and Legoland, but there are plenty of creative and unusual things to occupy your kids on-site: s'mores roasts, arts and crafts, teen dance classes, family yoga, “dive in” movies by the pool and more.

- **FAMILY TALK** “All the activities you could want in a wonderful location.” “Excellent restaurants. Top-notch service and great golf.”

LACOSTA.COM / 760-438-9111

2

The Broadmoor COLORADO

PLAY Though it was the site of the 2011 U.S. Women's Open, the East Course won't beat you up from the forward tees. The Mountain course has a few forced carries, but some like it because it's the most remote from the main resort. The West is a lot like the East but with smaller greens and more elevation changes. All three are very welcoming to families.

- **STAY** The cottages overlooking the East course's 18th hole can be set up with anywhere from one to eight bedrooms. The common areas and patios “give kids a little more freedom to stretch out and be themselves,” says head golf professional Mark Kelbel.

- **THE DEAL** Rates and package deals vary depending on demand, but there are some constants: Kids under 13 play for free with an adult after 2 p.m.; complimentary golf clinics run four days a week at 3 p.m.; discounted rates go into effect at 4 p.m.

- **NOT GOLF** Boating, hiking and horseback riding combine with more quiet pursuits like painting classes and jewelry making. Plus, the Colorado Springs area has countless other diversions, from a cog railway up Pikes Peak to a museum of bugs.

- **FAMILY TALK** “Spectacular customer service and accommodations.”

BROADMOOR.COM / 855-634-7711

3

Boyne Resorts MICHIGAN

PLAY Boyne has 11 courses spread among three resort sites all within an hour's drive. The Boyne Mountain resort has a pair of 18s. The Inn at Bay Harbor has 45 holes, including the highly regarded Bay Harbor Golf Club. The Boyne Highlands resort has five courses, including two of the state's top-ranked, Heather and Arthur Hills.

- **STAY** Close as the resorts are, most families remain at one rather than shuttle around. Groups with multiple avid golfers tend to gravitate toward Boyne Highlands because of the quantity and quality of its courses. Families where everyone isn't a golfer are often drawn to Boyne Mountain and its massive indoor water park.

- **THE DEAL** Kids under 18 play free with a paying adult after 2 p.m. on all the courses except Bay Harbor, where the free play begins at 5 p.m. At other times, kids pay just a cart fee—around \$25.

- **NOT GOLF** Paintball, Segways, wake-boarding—you name it, they've got it. Highlands and Mountain offer all-day kid camps. At Highlands, don't miss the Young Americans Dinner Theatre, featuring classic and modern show tunes performed by young adults.

- **FAMILY TALK** “I like the prices.” “Boyne is pure Michigan.”

BOYNE.COM/GOLF / 855-688-7025

4

Walt Disney World FLORIDA

PLAY At the resort that calls itself “the happiest place on earth,” the golf is known as “the happiest place on turf.” The longest of the three 18-hole courses, Magnolia, used to be a PGA Tour stop but is set up very friendly. The nine-hole, walking-only Oak Trail is excellent for children and newbies.

- **STAY** Looking to roll out of bed and amble over to the first tee? Your best bet is Disney Saratoga Springs, overlooking the Lake Buena Vista Golf Course. Shades of Green, a non-Disney-owned property for active or retired military personnel, is the only lodging on-site at the Palm and Magnolia courses. The Polynesian resort is as close as you can get to Oak Trail—about a half-mile walk. Note: There is complimentary taxi service to any course when you stay at a Disney-owned hotel.

- **THE DEAL** The green fee for kids 17 and under is about half-price on the full-length courses (meaning \$30 to \$65 depending on the season), and kids always get free rental clubs. The nine-hole Oak Trail course is modestly priced and maxes out at \$40 for adults.

- **NOT GOLF** This one should be pretty obvious.

- **FAMILY TALK** “Dad can go play and hardly anybody notices.”

DISNEYWORLD.DISNEY.GO.COM / (407) 939-1936

5

Pinehurst Resort NORTH CAROLINA

PLAY The most famous course is No. 2, site of three U.S. Opens. But there are eight (!) others, which are mostly family-friendly with firm fairways and few forced carries. There are markers for kids' teeing areas on seven of the courses, and plans are in place to add special youth tee boxes on courses 1, 3, 6 and 7 this year.

- **STAY** The condos overlooking course No. 5 are convenient for families looking to spread out and/or cook. The Carolina Hotel is closest to the pool and spa—and home to the resort's sprawling breakfast buffet. “Once my kids saw that buffet, there was no way we were staying anywhere but the Carolina,” says one repeat visitor. All accommodations are connected by a free, reliable shuttle.

- **THE DEAL** Children 17 and under get a price break on golf, but it still costs \$65 a round—except for No. 2, which is \$235 for kids. Kids 12 and under eat and stay free when in the same room with a paying adult. Kids 13-17 get half off their meal plans.

- **NOT GOLF** Not a ton of modern-day stimulation here, but the classics are expertly handled: biking, boating, swimming, fishing and shopping.

- **FAMILY TALK** “Great respect for the history of the game.” “Don't need a car. It's all right there.”

PINEHURST.COM / 800-487-4653

FIVE MORE, FROM WEST TO EAST **KAPALUA, HAWAII** Pack your swim trunks because there's no way you're avoiding the beach, even with two highly regarded courses beckoning. **SUNRIVER RESORT, OREGON** Rock climbing, whitewater rafting, horseback riding, fly-fishing: There's so much to enjoy when not on its four courses. **SANDESTIN GOLF AND BEACH RESORT, FLORIDA** A laid-back vibe permeates this sprawling Panhandle destination with 72 holes and multiple offerings for kids. **THE GREENBRIER, WEST VIRGINIA** This fancy and at times formal resort—if you doubt it, check out the 567-word dress code—has four public courses and activities from falconry to bowling to a casino. **SAMOSET RESORT, MAINE** Overlooking the Atlantic, this New England classic has 18 holes, sailing, basketball, disc golf, a pool and more.